guidelines, for the first time, give the HRD Ministry full control not only over the foreign exchange programmes but also over the selection of monitoring procedure for foreign scholars." It has happened for the first time in the history. So, I would like to know from the hon. Minister what is the secret in taking away all the powers, for the first time, in fifty years of India's independence.

डा. मुरली मनोहर जोशी : श्रीमन्, समाचार पत्रों में जो कुछ छपा है वह सत्य से कुछ दूर है। 1986 में कुछ गाइड-लाइंस बनाई गई थीं और उसके बाद 1999 में गाइड-लाइंस बनीं। गाइड-लाइंस को दोबारा दोहराया गया है। हमने तो केवल उसके अंदर व्यवस्था की है कि ये गाइड-लाइंस हैं इन पर ध्यान दिया जाए इन गाइडलाइंस का कारण क्या है वह भी हमने उसमें बतला दिया है।

DR. KARAN SINGH : Mr. Chairman, Sir, as the Chancellor of one of the Central Universities—Jawaharlal Nehru University—I would like to ask the hon. Minister whether he is aware of the fact that these guidelines have caused a great deal of disquiet among the academic community. There is a feeling that in a democratic and open society like ours, these sort of restrictive guidelines, are not approved. Would the hon. Minister accept the suggestion that he should call a conference of the Vice-Chancellors of the Central Universities—this question is directly relating to the Central Universities—talk with them, find out whether they are also feeling these to be restrictive. If there is a consensus that these guidelines need to be amended, will he do the needful?

डा. मुरली मनोहर जोशी : श्रीमन्, हमें अभी किसी कुलपति ने इस संबंध में कोई कठिनाई का पत्र नहीं भेजा है। अगर कोई कठिनाई आएगी तो उसको हम जरूर देखेंगे। हमारे पास पत्र नहीं भेजा गया है। और दूसरी बात यह है कि देश की सुरक्षा यह प्रथम है। दुनिया में ऐसी कहीं भी डेमोक्रेसी नहीं है जहां इतना आतंकवाद है और जितने इस प्रकार के खतरे हैं। तो डेमोक्रेसी हम जरूर बचाना चाहते हैं और डेमोक्रेसी इस देश में बची रहे इसलिए हम देश को हर प्रकार के खतरों से बचाना चाहते हैं। उसी की दृष्टि से हम प्रबंध कर रहे हैं।

*696. [The questioner (Shri Sukhbir Singh) was absent. For answer *vide* page 51-52 *infra*]

Review of food laws affecting growth of FPIs

*697. SHRI R.P. GOENKA : Will the Minister of FOOD PROCESSING INDUSTRIES be pleased to state :

(a) whether it is a fact that a comprehensive review of various food laws administered by different Ministries has been undertaken recently to remove bottlenecks affecting growth of the food processing industries;

(b) If so, the details thereof; and

(c) the measures contemplated for rapid growth of the food processing sector, so as to realise its full potential ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF FOOD PROCESSING INDUSTRIES (SHRI N.T. SHANMUGAM) : (a) to (c) A Statement is laid on the Table of the House.

Statement

(a) and (b) A Group of Ministers (GOM) has been constituted by the Government to propose legislative and other changes for preparing a Modern Integrated Food Law and related regulations. It is proposed to converge and modernize the existing laws and to bring about a single statute for regulation of food products. This law is expected to take into account the international scenario and the modern developments so as to create an enabling environment for compliance by the industry.

(c) The Government has taken following policy initiatives for rapid growth of the food processing sector.

1. A draft National Food Processing Policy has been framed and Group of Ministers (GOM) has been entrusted with the responsibility of approving the draft Policy. The proposed draft policy aims at creating an enabling environment through harmonization and simplification of food laws, rationalization of tax structure, creation of infrastructural facilities, development of human skills and expertise through Entrepreneurship Development Programmes (EDPs) etc. and special consideration in development of policy and plants for North Eastern Region.

2. The central excise duty has been brought down from 16% to 0% on processsed fruits and vegetable products, 16% to 8% on consumer products like biscuits etc. and 32 to 24% on aerated soft drinks.

3. In order to encourage setting up of more units in this sector, foreign direct investment in this sector has been brought under automatic route with certain conditions.

4. Ministry of Food Processing Industries under its Plan Schemes provides financial assistance by way of grant-in-aid for :

(i) Technology Upgradation, Establishment/Modernization of Food Processing Industries

(ii) Human Resource Development

(iii) Quality Assurance and Research & Development

(iv) Strengthening of Institutions

(v) Backward and Forward Integration and other Promotional Activities

(vi) Infrastructure Development

श्री आर. पी. गोयनका : सभापति महोदय, माननीय मंत्री जी ने जवाब तो बहुत लम्बा चौड़ा एक पेज का दे दिया है लेकिन असल में क्या फल मिला, क्या काम आपने किया है उसको तो कुछ बताइए ?

SHRI N.T. SHANMUGAM : Mr. Chairman, Sir, the Ministry of Food Processing Industries prepared a draft Bill and circulated the same to various Ministries and departments and received their comments in January, 2003. And, in March, 2003, a Group of Ministers considered that draft Bill alongwith the comments received. And, after that, it submitted its Report. Now, on the basis of the Report, we have finetuned the draft Bill and sent it to the Law Commission for their comments.

श्री आर. पी. गोयनका : क्या काम किए हैं वे यह बतला रहे हैं। मैं फल पूछ रहा हूँ कि इन कामों का परिणाम क्या है, क्योंकि परिणाम कुछ है ही नहीं।

श्री बालकवि बैरागी : माननीय सभापति महोदय, इसका फल तो यह भोगेंगे ही, अब क्या करें।

श्री मूल चन्द मीणा : जवाब नहीं आ रहा है, सर।

श्री आर.पी. गोयनका : रहने दीजिए सर, नेक्स्ट क्वेश्चन कर लीजिए।

श्री सभापति : जवाब तो दिया है। खैर छोड़िए।

Carrying Capacity of National Parks

*698. SHRI RAMACHANDRA KHUNTIA : Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state :

(a) whether Government are aware that overcrowding is disturbing peace of National Parks leading to aberrant behaviour of animals especially tigers;

(b) if so, reasons for allowing more tourists during peak season in National Parks than recommended by Wild Life Boards; and

(c) steps taken by Government to review carrying capacity of all the National parks?

THE MINISTER OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI T. R. BAALU) : (a) to (c) While no ceiling on the limit of number of tourists has been prescribed, Government of India has issued normative guildlines to regulate tourist visitation in Protected Areas as per carrying capacity, to reduce the impact of tourist influx on wildlife habitat and wild animals, in accordance with the National Wildlife Action Plan.